

**Abstract of the Invention**

A system and methodology is provided for improving directory operations within a system providing an electronic hierarchical directory of items. The system includes a component which analyzes probabilities and utilities associated with determining potential target directories for storing and accessing data, and a component for building a subset of the potential target directories that are predicted to be the target directory. The probabilities and/or utilities are functions of expected navigation costs associated with traversing from a displayed directory to at least one of the potential target directories. Methods in accordance with the present invention can be coupled with displays of substructures that format the substructures into a coherent hierarchical view.